



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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December 10, 2001

David H. Johnson
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Sciences Program
600 Capitol Way, North
Olympia, Washington 98501-1091

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I write you today to express support for the Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Program (SSHAP) in further developing a standardized framework to coordinate Salmon Recovery efforts at the Regional level in central and eastern Washington. As Washington State's Watershed Lead for the Wenatchee and Entiat Watershed Planning efforts and the Department of Ecology's designated lead providing technical assistance to the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Area, I am well acquainted with the current state of fish, fisheries, fish habitat, and related natural resource information in the Upper Columbia. I appreciate that the SSHAP information system is designed for watershed-, basin- and regional-scale habitat analyses to focus salmonid protection and restoration efforts, and to detect trends in habitat over time. I support the use of SSHAP as a framework for enhancement of coordination of natural resource information and salmon recovery decision-making.

Regional resource managers and local decision-makers are in need of a comprehensive and contiguous GIS structure for Sub-Basin and related planning. We have been developing such systems in the Entiat Sub-Basin (known locally as EGIS), and in central Washington state, pertaining to water resource management (known as GWIS). SSHAP complements and enhances these efforts, focusing on the need for salmonid protection and restoration through assemblage of habitat information. As you well know, GIS provides a common spatial framework for storing and relating different types of habitat information, such as fish distribution, gradient, fish passage barriers, flow, temperature, and hydrologic modifications. SSHAP obtains and incorporates existing information, creates and incorporates new data, and is designed for scheduled updates.

A partnership-based information system provides a comprehensive "picture" of the watershed and allows users to create summary data and maps for their area of choice, provided that partners share information and agree upon appropriate use of the information. This partnership-based effort is already assisting decision-makers locally and from outside the area in prioritizing recovery efforts and dollars, but needs to be enhanced and maintained.

It is my hope that SSHAP will have the necessary support to continue and enhance this effort in central and eastern Washington.

Sincerely,

John T. Monahan
Watershed Lead and Upper Columbia River Salmon Recovery Technical Assistance

✓ Cc: Dr. Jeff Koenings

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